

White Bird

April 2008 Volume 31, Issue 8

Sandy Artman, Editor

Dan Artman, Dispatcher



www.PeaceRiverAudubon.org

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(941)

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An Evening with Audubon By Cathy Olson



An evening with Audubon was a great success! Jo Morrison, the keynote speaker, relayed stories of her experiences on the Babcock Ranch. After the presentation she auto-graphed copies of her new book Babcock Ranch and Tales of Bygone Days. Our banquet was held at the Twin Isles Country Club and the food was wonderful. The silent auction for environmental education was a great success. A total of \$1,600 was raised. Special thanks to all who made the banquet a success. Much work went into organizing, soliciting donations, and setting up the event.

Eva Furner swept the photo contest and won first, second and third place with her photos of courting terns, red-tailed tropic bird, and great horned owl. Congratulations to Eva and thanks to all the photographers for their wonderful photos!

Please be sure to frequent the local businesses who donated items for our event: Benadetto's Restaurant, Grande Tours, Heron Creek, Joe Cracker Restaurant, Kingfisher Fleet, Mel's Diner, Outback Steak House (Port Charlotte), Palmetto Grille, Portofinos Restaurant, Regal Cinema, Target (Port Charlotte), and TGI Fridays (Port Charlotte).

Please also frequent those not so local businesses who donated items: Busch Gardens, Edison Ford Winter Estates, Florida Aquarium, Florida Native Plants, Florida Railroad Museum, G Wiz Science Museum, Historic Bok Sanctuary, Imaginarium, Kennedy Space Center, Marie Selby Gardens, Mote Marine, Pineapple Press, and Sarasota Jungle Gardens.

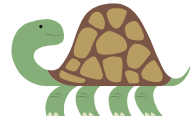
Extra special thanks to the artists who donated their work: Linda Blondheim, Kevin Edwards, F. Stop Fitzgerald, Lester Kuhn, Jo Moorer, Linda Moreau, Wilder Scott and Starr Zachritz and finally, all the individuals who donated items.

Shorebird ID Sunday, April 13

Join Kevin Edwards on April 13 at Bunche Beach Preserve where he will provide guidance on identifying shorebirds. San Carlos Bay Bunche Beach Preserve, in Lee County, is one of the regions best places to see shorebirds. We will meet at 7:30 am and carpool from the south field trip location (Sweet Bay on US 41, Punta Gorda).



Next Meeting April 17 at 6:30 PM Speaker Missy Christie



Please join us on April 17 to hear Missy Christie, Charlotte County Natural Resources Division, talk about sea turtles and shorebirds. She will relay interesting facts and update us on the County's efforts to protect these animals.

April Field Trip—Corkscrew Swampout by Eleanor Marr

The **April 19** Field Trip will be to Corkscrew Swamp. We will walk the boardwalk in search of spring migrants as well as breeding plumage wading birds. Bird song should be great in the spring, an opportunity to increase your recognition of birds by sound. The truck trip that had been planned was unfortunately cancelled. Cost for entrance to Corkscrew is \$5 for Audubon members and \$10 for others, payable at Corkscrew. Meet at the south meeting place, Sweet Bay Supermarket parking lot on Rt. 41 south of Burnt Store Road, at 6:45, with the caravan leaving at 7 AM promptly. Bring lunch.



May Walkabout by Phyllis Cady

Please join us on **Tuesday, May 6th**, for the next Audubon Walkabout. It will be held at the Charlotte County Environmental Center (CHEC), at the Alligator Creek site. The location is 10941 Burnt Store Road in Punta Gorda. Please meet in the parking area at 8:00 A.M. We will be taking a walk along Eagle Point Trail, which is about a mile long. We'll be looking for birds and enjoying the spring blooms along the way. Those who would like a longer trip can continue along on the Three Lakes Trail. As usual, please bring sunscreen, insect repellent, water, and hiking shoes. For those who want to make a day of it and bring a picnic lunch, there is a screened room available. This trip will be led by Phyllis Cady who is a trail guide at CHEC. Please call 941-575-4009 if you have any questions.



Babcock Ranch Report By Cathy Olson

Thirty-four people attended the March field trip to Babcock Ranch Preserve. We saw quite a few birds in the parking lot including a hairy woodpecker, yellow-rumped and palm warblers, and white eyed vireo. We then walked the newly opened ecotrail and despite the gusty wind, saw swallow-tailed kites, common ground doves and a chipping sparrow. At 10, we boarded the bus and Arnie Sarlo, general manager, took us on a behind the scenes tour of the Babcock Ranch Preserve. Along the way, Arnie told us about the ranch, Telegraph Swamp and its history, the cattle and silviculture businesses, and future plans for the development of the new town. During the tour, we stopped to view wild turkeys, an Eastern phoebe eating a dragonfly, Eastern bluebirds, wading birds, ducks, and even an American bittern (Good spotting Tony and Gregg). Our thanks go to Arnie Sarlo and Babcock Ranch Management for this amazing opportunity where we saw a total of fifty species of birds!



Hathaway Walkabout by Eleanor

On Tuesday March 4, 18 people gathered for a walkabout at Hathaway Park on a cloudy windy day. While birds were active before the walk started, things quieted down. A Red-shouldered Hawk called loudly and perched nearby several times, and Blue Jays were especially raucous. Dave Mathewson, from Parks and Recreation, kept things lively with plant identification and tales of natural history. Finding not much of interest on the trails and by Shell Creek, Dave led us toward the east end of the park and back into the woods, through low berry vines that untied our shoes and scratched bare legs. We passed close by a perched female Cooper's Hawk. Dave called in a Barred Owl who perched overhead quite close and stayed around the area for some time. The photographers had a field day. A Cooper's Hawk swooped in and had a minor territorial dispute with the owl, who won. On our way back to the cars, a male Cooper's Hawk was spotted on a near-by perch, close to what was probably its nest. An Osprey flew about, and a couple of high-flying Swallowtail Kites brought the day's total to 39 species, and quite the day for raptors.



Harns Marsh Trip Report by Cathy Olson

Nine people went to Harns Marsh for PRAS's first surprise field trip on March 30. We identified a total 63 species of birds, 3 species of reptiles, heard 3 species of frogs, 5 species of butterflies and some of us saw multiple river otters! Some of the best birds included: limpkins, snail and swallow-tailed kites, American bittern, black-crowned night heron, and brown thrasher. What a fun trip! Remember, you can only find out about these last minute spontaneous field trips if you are a member of PRAS's Nature Alert or Updates email groups.



Volunteer of the Month Louise Lewis



Congratulations to Louise Lewis who is our volunteer of the month. The last two years Louise volunteered to solicit donations from local businesses for our annual Silent Auction. Her efforts were essential to making the auction a success. Additionally, Louise's beautiful handmade skirt was a great enhancement for PRAS's first entry in the Historical Society's Symphony of Trees. Furthermore, Louise and her last year's winning team 'Mangrove Cuckoos', will be defending their title as they once again help to raise money for environmental education in our annual Birdathon. Over the past 31 years volunteers like Louise have been essential to making PRAS an important part of our community. If you would like to volunteer in any way, please contact Gregg at President@PeaceRiverAudubon.org.

Photography Group Report by Bill Marr

In the month of March group activities fell at new times and places. The group held a morning photo shoot at Ollie's Pond on March 10 where an especially busy and cooperative Snowy Egret made a great photo op. Some members went on the Babcock Ranch Field Trip on March 8. A morning meeting on March 25 was made necessary because Bill had an evening plane to catch.

April activities for the group include a 9AM photo shoot on April 8 at the Port Charlotte Beach complex. The group should be able to take good pictures of gulls, terns, skimmers and other shore birds before the beach crowd chases them off. The April 19 field trip to Corkscrew Swamp will afford an opportunity to find birds in breeding plumage and perhaps displaying. The final meeting of the season will be at 2 PM on April 22 at the Watershed Building at CHEC on Burnt Store Road, Punta Gorda. The group will share photos and tips, and make plans for next season.



For further information, call Bill Marr at 941-624-4182. Photo enthusiasts are also encouraged to look for photo opportunities at PRAS walkabouts and field trips.

Board Nominations Needed

The PRAS board has selected a nominating committee consisting of Cathy Olson, Mary Ann Hughes, and Walt Williams. This committee is responsible for seeking nominations for the 2008-2009 Board of Directors. No experience is necessary, only a willingness to help move our Audubon society forward. If you are able to serve your chapter and community or can think of someone who may be, please send nominations to the committee chair Cathy Olson at olsonc@peacriveraudubon.org or call 941-613-6753.

PRAS Establishes College Scholarship Fund



Thanks to the generosity of LaDonna Kennedy, who upon her passing has donated \$5,000 to PRAS, we plan to establish a college scholarship fund. While the details are yet to be decided, the scholarship would be periodically awarded to encourage a college student interested in a career in the environmental sciences and to reward him/ her for academic achievement and community involvement.

It is our hope that Ms. Kennedy's thoughtful gift along with your additional donations can act as an endowment that will permit us to establish a permanent college scholarship fund. PRAS believes that such assistance is vital to fostering a new generation of environmental stewards. So please consider donating now and also, like Ms. Kennedy, by leaving a legacy by amending your will to include PRAS. Your gift will be enjoyed in our community by generations to come. For more information contact Gregg at 941-613-6753. To donate please complete the form below.

Donate to PRAS and give a gift to future generations

Your gifts are tax deductible and will help PRAS carry out its mission to protect the air we breathe, water we drink, and wildlife we love.

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____
 Phone: _____

How would you like your gift to be used?

- College Scholarship Fund \$ _____
 To encourage exceptional college students interested in a career in the environmental sciences.
- Audubon Adventures \$ _____
 Environmental educational materials for area grade schools.
- PRAS Environmental Education Programs \$ _____
 Such as Girl and Boy Scout birding programs, Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center, lectures to schools and organizations, etc...
- PRAS General Needs \$ _____
 Such as Audubon-Pennington Park, festival displays, literature printing, or based on need any of the funds above. Total Gift \$ _____

Send this form along with your gift to PRAS at P.O. Box 510760, Punta Gorda, FL 33951 or call Gregg Klowden at 941-613-6753

Speaker Schedule

April 17: Missy Christie - Sea Turtles & Shorebirds
 May 15 : Members night: PRAS members present slides

Field Trips and Walkabouts



April 13: *Shorebird identification* at Bunche Beach
 Kevin Edwards (South carpool location)
 April 19: *Field Trip: Corkscrew Swamp*
 Eleanor Marr 941-624-4182 (South carpool location)
 May 6: *Walkabout: Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center*
 Phyllis Cady 941-575-4009
 May 17: *Field Trip: Fish-Eating Creek*
 Mike Krzyzkowski 941-812-0764 (East carpool location)

***For Walkabouts: meet at the park entrance at 8 AM ***

*For Field Trips meet at designated place (*see below) at 7 AM unless otherwise noted

Carpool locations:

North: Peachland Mall:24133 Peachland Blvd., Pt Charlotte

East: Winn Dixie lot: 27680 Bermont Road, Punta Gorda

South: Sweet Bay lot: 10175 Tamiami Trail, Punta Gorda

Surprise Field Trips

Another special surprise field trip will be coming up soon. We would like to make such surprise trips periodically. If you would like to hear about these trips you will need to be signed up to either our 'PRAS Updates' email group or our 'Nature Alert' email group. .

Welcome to New Members

WELCOME

Tami Keiser
 Lloyd A. Wampach
 George C. Hoffman
 Ms Anne Edgar
 Ms Renee B Crocker



Subscribe to 'PRAS Update' to receive 2 or 3 monthly email reminders of upcoming meetings and field trips.

To sign up or for more information contact webmaster@peaceriveraudubon.org or visit <http://www.PeaceRiverAudubon.org/>

Subscribe to 'Nature Alert' to communicate with others concerned with nature, wildlife, and protecting the environment in the Charlotte County area

The Peace River Audubon Society
PO Box 510760
Punta Gorda, FL 33951-0760

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Check the "Exp" date on your address label!
"1208" means your PRAS and/or National membership expires December 2008. To save the cost of sending reminders, **please** use the application below to renew your membership. If you have questions please call Phyllis Cady at 575-4009 or send an email to: membership@peacriveraudubon.org



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C & R Graphics (folding donated)

The Peace River Audubon Society is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. Our Federal tax ID number is 59-2190872. We do not engage a professional solicitor and 100% of the funds generated by this request will be used to support our Chapter programs. Our registration number with the FDA Division of Consumer Services is SC-040701.

Electronic White Bird: If you would like to receive the White Bird via e-mail, please send a request to : whitebird@peacriveraudubon.org

Bird of the Month: Snail Kite(Rostrhamus Sociabilis)
by Cathy Olson, PRAS Board member

The snail kite, or Everglades kite, can be found in open wetlands in southern Florida and the Caribbean and parts of South and Central America. This medium sized hawk has a specially adapted bill used to extract the meat from the shells of apple snails. Occasionally other prey, such as turtles or crayfish is eaten. Interestingly, if a turtle is taken, meat from only one leg hole will be eaten, as if it were a snail. Male and female snail kites are sexually dimorphic; the males are blue-gray and the females are brown. They typically nest in loose colonies and may have more than one clutch per year. The female will sometimes leave a male to raise the nestlings so she may find another mate and have a second brood. Snail kites are quite social and will form large roosts, often with anhingas.



Peace River Audubon Society Membership Application / Renewal

Join us for some fun and birding. Help protect the air we breathe, the water we drink, & the wildlife we love...help us protect Florida.

New Membership
 Renewal

Chapter Code: **E14-7XCH**

Name: _____
Organization: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Phone: () _____
E-mail: _____

- \$20 Local Audubon Membership Only
Includes the "White Bird" newsletter with local news articles, local meetings, field trips, bird walks, & special events.
All proceeds stay within local chapter
- \$20 Local and National Audubon
Includes all of the above plus National Audubon magazine.
- Additional Gift for PRAS
Please help PRAS continue our educational and conservation programs with a tax deductible contribution.

Total Enclosed \$ _____

MAIL CHECK WITH THIS FORM TO:

PRAS, PO box 510760, Punta Gorda, FL 33951-0760